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**PATENT COOPERATION TREATY
PCT
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT**

REC'D 12 AUG 2004

PCT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference FP18998	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416).
International Application No. PCT/AU2003/001727	International Filing Date (day/month/year) 24 December 2003	Priority Date (day/month/year) 10 January 2003
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC Int. Cl. 7 B03B 13/00		
Applicant BM ALLIANCE COAL OPERATIONS PTY LTD et al		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet.

This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of sheet(s).

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I Basis of the report
- II Priority
- III Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV Lack of unity of invention
- V Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI Certain documents cited
- VII Certain defects in the international application
- VIII Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 7 July 2004	Date of completion of the report 2 August 2004
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer JOHN DEUIS Telephone No. (02) 6283 2146

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/AU2003/001727

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

the international application as originally filed.

the description, pages , as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of
pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of

the drawings, pages , as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of

the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , received on with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
 the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
 the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

contained in the international application in written form.
 filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
 furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
 furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
 The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
 The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages
 the claims, Nos.
 the drawings, sheets/fig.

5. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims 1-56	YES
	Claims	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims 1-56	YES
	Claims	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-56	YES
	Claims	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

None of the individual citations disclose all the essential features as claimed. Claims 1-56 are novel and involve an inventive step.

The invention is directed to a method and apparatus for the processing of particulate material, wherein a parameter is monitored indicative of a separation value of the material, determining from the parameter an induced value indicative of the separating efficiency of the material that has passed through the separator, comparing the value with a predetermined value and generating an alarm if the value departs from the predetermined value.

The closest art found was:

GB 2188752 A (CENTURY AUTOFLOTE PTY. LTD.) 7 October 1987

US 4470901 A (BURGESSION) 11 September 1984

GB 2075867 A (NORTON-HARTY COLLIERY ENGINEERING LIMITED) 25 November 1981